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Letter dated 23 April 2007 from the Permanent Observer of the League of Arab States to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council

Pursuant to Article 54 of the Charter of the United Nations, I have the honour to transmit herewith a letter dated 18 April 2007 addressed to you from Mr. Amre Moussa, Secretary-General of the League of Arab States, regarding the outcome of the Arab summit held in Riyadh on 28 and 29 March 2007 (see annex).

I should be grateful if you would arrange for the text of the present letter and its annex to be circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Yahya **Mahmassani**
Ambassador

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Annex to the letter dated 23 April 2007 from the Permanent Observer of the League of Arab States to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council

[Original: Arabic]

It is a pleasure for me to express to you my sincere appreciation for your attending and effectively contributing to the Arab summit held in Riyadh on 28 and 29 March 2007 and the discussions and meetings that took place in parallel with it.

Within the framework of continued mutual consultation and coordination between our two organizations, I felt it would be useful to inform you of the main Arab positions and directions discernible in the Riyadh declaration. I should also like to apprise you of the decisions adopted by the summit regarding the evolving political and security conditions in the region as well as related issues, both regional and international, that are of mutual concern, as part of the ongoing discussion between us and in furtherance of our dialogue and exchange of views on such matters.

I. Development of the working mechanisms of the League of Arab States and the Joint Arab Action system

The Riyadh summit adopted a number of important decisions aimed at developing mechanisms and methods of collective Arab action for dealing with the strategic, political and development challenges that face the Arab countries and Arab regional security. Chief among these were the following decisions:

1. To hold a consultative Arab summit whenever necessary to deal with an important or urgent Arab issue that calls for consultation and the coordination of Arab positions and policies, in addition to the periodic holding of the annual Arab summit in March of each year;

2. To charge the General Secretariat of the League and its subsidiary bodies with preparing for the holding of an Arab summit dedicated to the discussion of economic, social and development-related questions with a view to the adoption of integrated Arab programmes of work and strategies aimed at encouraging the private sector and giving it a share in the development process and at elaborating joint economic and development projects with direct, palpable benefits in terms of improving the quality of life of Arab nationals. Here priority must be accorded to infrastructure projects, such as those relating to road networks, aviation, electrical grid interconnection and communications, as well as to the requirements for completing the construction of the Arab free trade zone and the preparation of the necessary conditions for the establishment of the Arab customs union;

3. To operationalize the working mechanisms of the Arab Security and Peace Council following the coming into operation of its basic system, which we expect to play a pivotal role in warding off and settling disputes between Arab countries by peaceful means, something that will require coordination with the Security Council and the Peace and Security Council of the African Union;

4. To charge the General Secretariat of the League and the Arab organizations and agencies concerned with monitoring the development of scientific research and education in the Arab States, bearing in mind the report presented by the Secretary-General of the League to the Riyadh summit on that subject and in keeping with what is stated in the Riyadh Declaration to the effect that absolute

priority is to be accorded to the development of education and educational curricula in the Arab world so as to meet comprehensive development and modernization needs and firmly implant the values of dialogue and creativity, human rights principles and the effective, positive participation of Arab women.

II. The Palestinian question and the Arab-Israeli conflict

1. The Riyadh summit reaffirmed the need to adhere to the Arab peace initiative as adopted by the Beirut summit in 2002. It called on the Government of Israel and all Israelis to accept the initiative and seize the opportunity to resume the process of direct, earnest negotiations on all tracks. The summit charged the Arab Ministerial Committee created to deal with that initiative with continuing its efforts and establishing task forces to make the necessary contacts with the Secretary-General of the United Nations, States members of the Security Council, the Quartet and other parties concerned with the peace process, with a view to the resumption of the peace process, the garnering of support for the initiative and the start of earnest negotiations on the basis of the agreed terms of reference;

2. The summit also reaffirmed its full support for the Palestinian national unity Government and the refusal to cooperate with any aspect whatsoever of the embargo measures imposed on the Palestinian people; called on the international community to lift the embargo immediately, recognize that Government, cooperate with it without discrimination and resume the offering of assistance and financial and economic grants to it; and decided to continue to offer Arab financial support for the budget of the Palestinian National Authority in the amount of 55 million dollars monthly for a period of a year, starting 1 April 2007;

3. The summit denounced the Israeli excavation work beneath and in the area of Al-Aqsa Mosque and called on the international organizations and agencies concerned, in particular the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), to shoulder their responsibility for preserving Islamic and Christian holy places in Al-Quds al-Sharif; reaffirmed its rejection of all Israeli measures aimed at the judaization and annexation of the city of Al-Quds; affirmed the illegality of the separation wall and the Israeli settlements within occupied Palestinian territory; called upon the Security Council to shoulder its responsibility towards the Palestinian people and send international observers to protect them against the persistent Israeli violations of their legitimate national rights; and demanded the speedy release of Palestinian prisoners, especially Palestinian women prisoners and children in Israeli prisons in accordance with Security Council resolution 1325 (2000) and other relevant United Nations resolutions;

4. The summit also reaffirmed the well-established Arab positions concerning support for Syria's right to regain possession of the occupied Syrian Golan, rejected all measures taken by the Israeli occupation authorities for the purpose of altering the legal, natural and demographic status of the Syrian Golan and deemed the continuation of that occupation an ongoing threat to peace and security in the region.

III. Solidarity with and support for Lebanon

- The summit reaffirmed total Arab solidarity with Lebanon and the provision of political and economic support to Lebanon and its Government so as to maintain Lebanon's unity, peace and stability and its full sovereignty over its territory;

- It also reaffirmed the need to achieve a permanent ceasefire; denounced the Israeli violations of Security Council resolution 1701 (2006); welcomed the seven-point plan presented by the Lebanese Government for extending the control of the Lebanese State over all its territory; and called on the Secretary-General of the United Nations and the Security Council to take the Lebanese proposal concerning the Shab'a Farms area, contained in the said plan, into consideration when discussing that question, so as to guarantee Lebanon's rights;

- The summit further stressed that the discovery of the truth behind the terrorist crime of assassination that took the life of Prime Minister Rafiq Hariri as well as other terrorist crimes, and the appearance of the suspects before a tribunal of an international character in order to have their just deserts meted out to them in a non-politicized, revenge-free setting in accordance with the rules of procedure to be adopted for that tribunal within a context of agreement among the Lebanese, on the basis of a request of the Lebanese Government and in keeping with the Lebanese constitutional rules and principles in force, will help to establish justice and strengthen the faith of the Lebanese in their democratic system;

- The summit also called upon all Lebanese groups and forces to engage in a national dialogue based on common denominators and what has been achieved in terms of national accord, with a view to arriving at solutions that thwart anyone intent on disrupting Lebanon's national stability and security and ensuring that a solution to the current political crisis is reached, enabling all Lebanese to put the law into effect and abide by the Lebanese Constitution and the Taif Agreement. The summit expressed its support for the efforts of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and the Secretary-General of the League towards solving the current political crisis and preserving Lebanon's unity, security and stability.

IV. Developments in Iraq

- The summit accorded especial importance to developments in Iraq and adopted a comprehensive Arab conception of the political and security solution to the challenges faced by that country, based on the following elements:

  - Respecting Iraq's unity, sovereignty and independence and its Islamic Arab identity, rejecting any calls for its break-up and emphasizing non-interference in its internal affairs;

  - Achieving stability in Iraq and overcoming the current crisis, which requires a parallel solution involving the political and security levels in order to deal with the causes of the crisis and remove the seeds of sectarian strife and terrorism;

  - Affirming respect for the will of all components of the Iraqi people in determining their political future and the fact that the responsibility for achieving security and stability lies on the shoulders of the national unity Government, the constitutional institutions and Iraqi political leaders and depends on the assistance and support of Arab and neighbouring States for all efforts aimed at bringing about national reconciliation, including the efforts of the Iraqi Government, with a view to the following:

- Striving to broaden the political process so as to bring about wider participation of the various segments of the Iraqi people;
- Confronting sectarianism, seeking to eliminate it definitively, rejecting and countering groups whose aim is to ignite such strife and holding a comprehensive Iraqi accord conference at the earliest suitable date;
- Expediting the revision of controversial articles in the Constitution so as to bring Iraqi national accord in keeping with the mechanisms established and agreed on;
- Revising the Debaathification Board Act with a view to furthering national reconciliation efforts;
- Emphasizing citizenship and equality as the foundation for the building of the new Iraq;
- Paying attention to the equitable distribution of Iraq's wealth among all the regions of Iraq and all segments of the Iraqi people;
- The dissolving of the various militias in Iraq by the Government and striving to put an end to all armed manifestations;
- Expediting the formation and training of Iraqi military and security forces on a professional, national basis with a view to the evacuation of all foreign forces from Iraq.

- The summit also stressed the importance of Iraq's neighbouring States playing an effective role in assisting the country in strengthening security and stability; of non-interference in its internal affairs; of countering terrorism and putting an end to the acts of violence that threaten the unity of its territory and its people; and of requesting the Secretary-General of the League and the Arab Ministerial Committee on Iraq to pursue efforts and contacts with the various regional and international parties concerned in order to help Iraq overcome the present challenges.

V. Support for peace, development and unity in the Republic of the Sudan

- The summit also emphasized the importance of closer cooperation between the United Nations, the African Union, the League of Arab States and the Sudanese Government with a view to accelerating the implementation of the Abuja agreement on peace in Darfur and the understandings reached in both Addis Ababa and Abuja, as well as the importance of efforts to bring movements that had not signed the Abuja agreement into the peace process so as to speed up national reconciliation efforts and arrive at a rapid and comprehensive settlement of the conflict that will put an end to the human suffering in the Darfur region. The summit also called on the tripartite committee made up of the United Nations, the African Union and the Government of the Sudan to convene an urgent meeting of the experts concerned to agree on ways in which the United Nations can support the African Union forces operating in Darfur.

VI. Support for the Somali Republic

- The summit welcomed the decision of the Somali Transitional Federal Government to hold a national reconciliation conference in Somalia and stressed the importance of proper preparations for the conference to ensure that it includes all Somali parties. The summit called for the rapid deployment of forces of the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM), so as to provide security in Somalia and permit the early withdrawal of the Ethiopian forces.

VII. Occupation by Iran of the islands of the Greater Tunb, the Lesser Tunb and Abu Musa, which belong to the United Arab Emirates

- The summit reaffirmed the unqualified support of the Arab States for the full sovereignty of the United Arab Emirates over the three islands and for all peaceful means and measures adopted by the United Arab Emirates to regain its sovereignty over the three occupied islands.

VIII. Ridding the Middle East region of nuclear weapons — Issues related to the peaceful use of nuclear energy

- The summit decided to charge the Arab Ministers for Foreign Affairs with assessing the Arab policy that has been followed over the past three decades with regard to the initiative calling for the establishment of a zone free of weapons of mass destruction and proposing alternatives at the next Arab summit, given the failure of the international community to respond to the Arab demand for the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone. The summit further decided to suspend the work of the technical committee on the preparation of a draft treaty for making the Middle East a zone free of weapons of mass destruction, in particular nuclear weapons, which was set up in 1994, until Arab policy has been reassessed in the light of international developments.

- The summit called on Arab States to expand their use of peaceful nuclear technologies in the different fields that serve sustainable development and to take into account the varied needs of the different Arab States, while abiding by all the international treaties, conventions and regulations to which they have subscribed. It also charged the General Secretariat with drafting a collective Arab programme on the use of atomic energy and nuclear technology for peaceful purposes.

IX.

- In addition to the foregoing, the Riyadh summit took a number of important decisions on other Arab political issues having to do with the granting of Arab support to the Union of the Comoros; the dispute over the Lockerbie case, regarding which the summit affirmed the legitimate right of the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya to receive compensation for the material and human damage caused to it as a result of the sanctions that were imposed on it; and full Arab solidarity with the Syrian Arab Republic and rejection of the so-called "Syria Accountability Act", considered a breach of the principles of international law, resolutions of the United Nations and the Charter of the League of Arab States. The summit also called on the United States Administration to enter in good

faith into a constructive dialogue with Syria with a view to resolving the questions that stand in the way of improved relations between the two countries.

- The summit adopted a number of decisions relating to international terrorism and ways to combat it and to support for the dialogue of civilizations. It agreed on the establishment of an Arab plan for education regarding human rights principles during the period 2009-2014. In addition, it adopted resolutions for strengthening the frameworks of collective Arab cooperation with various influential associations, entities and States, in particular the African Union, the European Union, South American States, China and other active international and regional parties.

Lastly, I should like to take this opportunity to assure you once again of my keen personal interest in continued consultation with you with a view to expanding the existing horizons of cooperation between our organizations within the framework of our common effort to achieve security and stability in the Arab region and in the world at large.